

ST. LOUIS COUNTY
CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM POLICY MANUAL
FOR
PARENTS

PHHS # 12-11-0335
Revised 08/14/2013

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I. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Program Definitions

The Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps families pay for child care in order to work, look for work, or attend school. The CCAP program is available in all Minnesota counties and families may apply at county human service offices. The CCAP program includes these three subprograms:

- **MFIP Child Care:** for families who receive assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or the Diversionary Work Program (DWP).
- **Transition Year Child Care:** is available to families for a full year after their MFIP case closes. If there is a waiting list for the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Program, you may get help from this program for more than a year.
- **Basic Sliding Fee Child Care:** for other families with low incomes who meet the program requirements.

B. How to Apply Applications may be done in person, by mail, or online. **In St. Louis County, applications are taken for these programs at these three county offices:**

Government Services Center- Central Client Area, 1st Floor
320 West 2nd Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Northland Office Building – 2nd floor
307 South 1st Street
Virginia, MN 55792

St. Louis County Public Health & Human Service Dept
Hibbing Courthouse Annex
1814 East 14th Ave
Hibbing MN 55746

To apply by mail: call the office for your location and ask for worker of the day: in Duluth, call 218-726-2101; in Virginia, call 218-471-7137; in Hibbing, call 218-262-6000.

To apply online via St Louis County website: go to: www.stlouiscountymn.gov - click on in the following order: Adults & Families; Children Services; Child Care; Child Care Assistance; MN Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP); DHS website right side under Related Pages MN CCAP Application.

ApplyMN:

ApplyMn is Minnesota's secure, online system you use to apply for health care, cash assistance, SNAP (food support), emergency help, **and child care assistance programs.** **To apply through ApplyMN, go to one of the following websites:**

ApplyMN.com

www.minnesotahelp.info

mnhumanservices.dhs.state.mn.us

Note: You will need to create a user ID and a password when applying through ApplyMN.

C. Communication Process

This section provides a guide for contacting agency staff, and information regarding what parents and providers can expect from staff in terms of communication and time frames.

Customer Service Principles: The agency customer service policy states: “as a client and customer, you can expect to receive professional services and clear information respectfully, courteously and in a timely manner.” Staff in the child care unit will observe these principles, and will also expect professional courtesy and mutual respect in interactions with parents, providers and staff of other agencies. If individuals feel that these policies are not being followed, the agency has a Customer/Client complaint procedure which gives two options. The first choice is to talk to the supervisor of the employee who is working with you. The supervisor will work with you to resolve the complaint. The second choice is to speak with a Senior Manager from the service area from which you are receiving services.

Phone calls: The child care unit will return all phone calls within 2 business days. The large majority of calls are returned either the same day or the next day. Occasionally, when call volume is high, or when staff are attending required meetings or training, the call response time is delayed. Staff will receive calls regarding eligibility issues only from parents or their legally authorized representatives. The child care unit also has staff who specialize in provider registration and provider support. These workers will respond to calls from providers concerning the provider’s information on the MEC2 payment system, and general questions concerning billing forms and payment policies. Calls regarding the timing of payments (such as “has the State issued my check?”) will be returned in the order received. The majority of payments are issued by the State within two weeks of when the billing form was received. However, State and County policy allows 30 days to make a payment from the time a complete and accurate billing form was received.

Application Processing: Applications are usually processed within two weeks of when they are received by the child care unit if all verifications and supporting documents have been submitted. For families on MFIP, a plan from the Employment Services agency must be received before child care can be authorized. The State law allows 30 days for processing applications, after a complete application has been received at the agency.

AGENCY CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS:

Child Care Workers: Alphabetical list is on page 16 of this manual, Addendum B.

Provider general information and Legal Non-Licensed registrations:
Sue Marsy, 218-726-2174

Provider name and/or address change information on MEC2:
Tina Garrett, 218-726-2092

Child Care Unit Supervisor: Susan Sauls, 218-726-2108

Director, Child and Family Services Division: Holly Church, 218-725-5161

Public Health and Human Services Department
Administration: 218-726-2096

St. Louis County Toll free: 1-800-450-9777 to reach any of the above staff.

II. PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

A. Types of Child Care:

A Legal Non-licensed (LNL) Child Care Provider is registered with the County. For example, a friend, neighbor, or a relative who is 18 years of age or older can be registered. These providers do not have to be licensed if: a) they only provide care for relatives and/or, b) they provide care to a single unrelated family, or c) they provide care for less than 30 days in any 12 month period. LNL providers are required to follow State rules on completing mandated training.

A Licensed Family Child Care Provider is self-employed and licensed by the State. Because they are licensed, they can care for more families that are not related to them. This child care is done in the provider's home. Licensed providers are required to follow State rules for family child care homes under Minnesota Rules Chapters 9502.0300 to 9502.0445.

A Child Care Center has teachers and assistants and has to meet State rules for their programs. They can care for as many children as their State license allows. Preschools and nursery schools are also in this category.

License Exempt Center(s) are programs like a child care center that are not required to have a child care license. These include extended day school age childcare programs, extended kindergarten programs that offer more hours than half day free public kindergarten, camps licensed by the State Health Department, school age centers operated by public schools, and some other after school programs.

B. Provider Background Checks

Licensed providers have background studies completed as part of the licensing process, and legal non-licensed providers have these background studies as part of the CCAP registration process. Also, the State checks the backgrounds for licensed child care center staff.

Background studies include checks of the county Social Services records, history of child maltreatment, and criminal history checks. If the background check information includes certain crimes, child maltreatment history, and/or recent chemical dependency issues, a provider may be disqualified from providing care to families on Child Care Assistance.

State law prohibits the county from authorizing persons who have felony convictions for various crimes. Information on which crimes apply to this law is available for persons interested in providing child care. Background applicant studies are required for everyone age 13 and older in the household. If care is in the parent's home, only the provider needs a background applicant study. Fees are \$25 per person, up to a maximum of \$100.

The purpose of background studies is to assist in keeping children safe in child care. However, parents have the primary responsibility to choose a provider who has the ability to provide safe care and surroundings. Parents have the right and responsibility to choose a provider who they trust and who meets the county's requirements for registration or licensing.

C. New or Additional Requirements for LNL providers

Effective January 1, 2012, all LNL family child care providers are required to complete First Aid and CPR training prior to authorization for CCAP payments.

Additionally, upon subsequent renewal of a provider registration period, LNL family child care providers are required to provide verification of at least 8 hours of additional training listed in the Minnesota Center for Professional Development Registry.

This requirement has already been in place for Licensed Family Day Care providers.

D. Choosing a Provider

Parents have the right to:

- Choose any of the mentioned types of providers who are participating in CCAP.
- **Change child care providers as needed, with 15 day advance notice.**
- Use more than one provider, as needed for children.

For more information about licensed child care providers, including names of providers with vacancies, call the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) phone line at:

- ♦ 1-800-890-5399
OR search on-line at: www.mnchildcare.org

III. HOW THE CCAP PROGRAM WORKS – ELIGIBILITY

A. Family Copayments

Many families receiving CCAP are required to pay part of the costs of their child care. The amount of this co-payment depends on income and family size. The co-payment is subtracted from the payment to the provider, and parents pay this amount directly to their provider. If the co-payment is not paid, the State requires that child care assistance or CCAP be closed until the bill is paid, or until a payment agreement is worked out between the parent and the provider.

B. Exceptions to Collection of Copayments

If a provider chooses not to collect the copayment, the provider must keep a record concerning the date of service for which they did not collect the copayment.

Also, CCAP allows someone other than the parent to pay the copayment. In these cases, the provider must keep a record of the name of the person or organization who made the payment, and the dates of service.

C. Authorized Activities

CCAP allows child care to be authorized only for approved activities, such as job search, work or school, and may include reasonable amount of travel time. Other uses may result in overpayments or a referral for fraud investigation. Parents need to call their child care worker:

- **before using more hours** than are currently authorized, or
- when the school or work schedule changes, or
- when a job ends, or
- when they start or stop looking for work (job search).

Effective March 5, 2012, Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.09, subdivision 13, only allows child care assistance to be authorized for care provided in the child's home if the child's parents have authorized activities outside of the home and if one or more of the following circumstances are met:

1. the parents' qualifying activity occurs during times when out-of-home care is not available. If child care is needed during any period when out-of-home care is not available, in-home care can be approved for the entire time care is needed;
2. the family lives in an area where out-of-home care is not available; or
3. a child has a verified illness or disability that would place the child or other children in an out-of-home facility at risk or creates a hardship for the child and the family to take the child out of the home to a child care home or center.

Effective April 16, 2012, a legislative change to Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.011, subdivision 13, limits the time that an adult family member who is not in an authorized activity can be considered temporarily absent. A temporarily absent adult family member who is participating in an authorized activity may continue to be counted as part of the CCAP family for an unlimited time period as long as the family indicates that the family member plans to return, but other absent adult family members will be removed from the CCAP family after 60 days. Adverse action notices will be sent to affected families and child care providers.

D. Reporting Requirements

Parents must report the following changes for each family member to their Child Care Assistance worker **within ten (10) calendar days**.

Failure to report these changes within ten (10) calendar days may result in an overpayment, termination, or closing of your Child Care Assistance, a fraud investigation and/or possible criminal charges.

- Employment status.
- Names of people who move in or out of your household and their relationship to you and your child/children.
- Marriages, separations, divorces.
- Income, wage or salary increases and receipt or changes in child support, social security, MFIP, GA, unemployment insurance, insurance benefits and other cash payments.
- Child support paid by you to someone who does not live with you.
- Address or residence.
- Health and dental insurance premiums.
- Work, school, or job search hours.
- Names of child care providers.
- Child custody arrangements.

Provider change must be reported fifteen (15) days in advance

E. Medical Leave

CCAP will pay up to one (1) month of full-time child care provided the parent will be returning to current employment or training within ninety (90) days. This policy usually applies to single parent households. **The following conditions must be met:**

- The parent is incapable of providing child care during the medical leave of absence.
- The parent is expected to return to employment or an approved education or training program **within 90 calendar days** after leaving the activity.
- The inability of the parent to provide child care and the necessity of the medical leave is documented by a physician or licensed psychologist.

AND

- The amount of child care during the medical leave does not exceed the equivalent of one month of full-time (50 hours x 4.3 weeks = 215 hours).

F. Children with Special Needs –Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

The State has a policy about requirements for child care providers under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Providers are required to make “reasonable accommodations” for children with disabilities. If you have questions about compliance with the ADA, call the Dept. of Justice ADA information Line: 1-800-514-0301 (voice) or 1-800-514-0383 (TDD). You can also access their web site at www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahoml.htm.

The Child Care Assistance program has a process for approving special needs rates. Special needs rates must be services beyond those required to comply with the ADA. These rates are not for recovering the cost of measures required by the ADA. Please refer to the rate section of this manual for further information regarding requesting special needs rates.

G. Overpayments

When parents or providers are overpaid, the CCAP program will recover the overpayment as required by State policy. For overpayments to parents, this usually is done by increasing the co-payment until the amount is recovered. If the family is no longer using child care, St. Louis County sends a bill to the parent. This is true even when the overpayment is due to agency error. Families will be given an opportunity to make satisfactory re-payment arrangements with St. Louis County before the CCAP program ends the authorization or denies eligibility. However, if satisfactory re-payment is not being made, the State policies will not allow child care to be authorized. Parents and providers have appeal rights if they are found to have an overpayment.

IV. HOW THE CCAP PROGRAM WORKS – AUTHORIZATIONS AND PAYMENT

A. Payment Process

The parent or provider can mail or drop off the billing form for payment. Both the parent and their provider are responsible for the days and hours claimed on the billing form. Parents can question hours the provider puts on the billing form, and if there is disagreement, the parent should call their child care worker. If the parent fills out the billing form, the provider may question the hours and call the child care worker if they disagree with the parent.

Only the parent and the child care provider can sign billing forms that are sent in for payment. Do not sign any blank billing forms. Do not sign “for” someone else. If the County finds information on a billing form that is false, the County may follow through with legal action. Payments may be delayed if more hours are billed than authorized without prior approval or if billing forms are not filled out correctly.

Billing forms are entered on the State system by the St. Louis County Accounting Department. The State system then issues payments either by check or by electronic deposit. Once a billing form is processed, payments are generated nightly by the state payment system in St. Paul. Usually payment is made within two weeks of when the county receives an accurate and complete billing form. However, at times payments are delayed and the State allows 30 days for processing payments after a billing form is received by the county.

Within 2012/2013, St. Louis County will be working with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to implement an electronic billing system. This system will only be available to selected providers. Parents will be required to sign their children in/out when dropping off/picking up at these specific providers.

B. Provider Billing Practices

Providers establish their own policies for billing and payment. It is very important for parents and providers to discuss these policies ahead of time. Providers are required to give parents a written copy of their policies when they begin care and anytime a policy is updated or changed. These policies may include rates, absent day policies, and termination notice rules. Sometimes CCAP can pay all of the provider’s charges, and other times not, depending on the provider’s billing practices and how these fit with State policies. A provider may require that parents pay the difference in these cases.

CCAP will pay only up to State determined Child Care Maximum Rates. If the provider charges more than the maximum, which needs to be in their policy, the parent would be responsible for the difference.

C. Authorization and Payment

CCAP will pay:

- for the authorized hours of child care;
- up to the DHS maximum rates;
- minus the family's co-pay amount.

CCAP will not pay:

- more than the provider bills;
- for more care than the authorized hours;
- for more than the CCAP maximum rates;
- for provider vacation days, provider sick days, or any other days that child care is not available, other than for holidays;
- for nonstandard hour differential payments and payments for activity fees;
- for care that is provided for a child by a child care provider who resides in the same household or occupies the same residence as the child, effective March 5, 2012;
- limits CCAP payments to child care centers that receive CCAP payments for children and employ either the parent of the child or a person who lives with the child, effective January 1, 2013.

CCAP payments will be prohibited to licensed or license-exempt child care centers if more than 50% of the children cared for by the provider are children of the provider's employees or reside with center employees, effective January 1, 2013.

The amount paid is based on:

- the county where care is provided
- the age of child
- the type of provider
- the number of hours of child care that are authorized.
- Effective April 16, 2012: limits child care assistance payments for one day to the daily rate (or 10 hours for LNL providers) and one week to the weekly rate (or 50 hours for LNL providers).

Based on the provider's billing practices, CCAP will pay the maximum amount that is allowed by state law and rules.

D. Provider Rates

The State has set maximum child care rates for each County. Providers can charge less than these rates but cannot charge more for Child Care Assistance clients than they charge for private pay clients. See Addendum A for Rate Information.

E. State Absent Day Policy

Billing for absent days

Providers may bill CCAP for absent days if:

- The care was authorized by CCAP and scheduled by the parent, but the child was absent
AND
- It is the provider's policy to bill all of their families for absent days
AND
- The scheduled hours are identified in the provider's attendance records as an absent day
AND
- The care is available.

CCAP will not pay for more than ten absent days of scheduled care in a calendar year. If a child is absent for part of a day, the payment for that day will be for the amount of care that is scheduled for that day but the day will not count toward the 10 day limit.

Families and providers will be told the number of absent days used by each child on the *Service Authorization*. Additionally, the provider will be told the number of absent days used on the *Remittance Advice*. **However, this information is only as current as the last bill submitted by the provider.** If a child has more than one provider, or if *Billing Forms* are not submitted timely, it is possible that the number of absent days that have been used will be different than the information provided.

If a provider is aware that a child has stopped attending or has been absent for 7 consecutive days, they are to notify the family's CCAP worker immediately.

Effective January 1, 2013, a legislative change to Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.13, subdivision 7, **eliminates** absent day payments **for LNL family child care providers** and limits absent day payments to 10 days per calendar year for licensed providers and license exempt centers, with no exceptions.

Billing for holidays

CCAP will pay a provider's charge for up to 10 federal or state holidays per year if:

- The provider is closed and not providing care.
AND
- The provider charges all families for these days.
AND
- The holiday falls on a day when the child is authorized and scheduled to be in attendance.

If care is available on the holiday, but the child is absent, count the day as an absent day.

The 10 recognized state and federal holidays are:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King's Birthday (3rd Monday in January)
- Washington and Lincoln's Birthdays (3rd Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
- Christopher Columbus Day (2nd Monday in October) *
- Veterans Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving (4th Thursday in November)
- Christmas Day (December 25)

*The day after Thanksgiving may be substituted for Christopher Columbus Day.

Families may switch other cultural or religious holidays for the 10 recognized state and federal holidays if they let their CCAP worker know before or within 10 days after the substitution.

The family must request the substitution of an alternate holiday. Providers will let parents know their holidays if they are different than the 10 recognized state and federal holidays so they may request a substitution.

If the provider's service is not available on the holiday the provider bills for but the family needs care from another provider on that day, only one provider may be paid.

CCAP cannot pay for provider vacation days, provider sick days, or any other days that child care is not available, other than for holidays.

F. Sick Child Care

CCAP allows for child care billings for a child who, as result of illness, is unable to attend the family's regular child care provider, in addition to paying the child's regular provider. The rate for sick child care does not exceed the standard rate limits. This is the only exception in which CCAP allows for paying two providers for the same days/hours.

G. Special Needs Child Care Rates

The Child Care Assistance program policy for Special Need Rates requires the Parent and Provider request a Special Needs rate and the rate must be approved by DHS. (CCAP manual 9.54). A Special Needs Rate Variance form (DHS-4194) is completed by both parent and provider. Documentation of the child's special needs is included with the request.

The County will complete the County Recommendation form and submit the form to DHS. If approved, DHS will determine the rate, based on a process used by DHS. The County will receive notification of DHS' decision and rate.

The County will notify, in writing, both the parent and provider. If denied, the parent will be notified of the right to appeal.

MAXIMUM CHILD CARE RATES
Child Care Centers

Addendum A

(Effective November 28, 2011)

	<u>Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Full Day Rate</u>	<u>Weekly Rate</u>
Infant	\$3.15	\$31.55	\$155.03
Toddler	\$2.99	\$29.97	\$147.27
Preschool	\$2.90	\$28.92	\$142.11
School Age	\$2.99	\$29.97	\$149.86

Age Categories – Center

Infant	6 weeks to 16 months*
Toddler	17 months to 33 months*
Preschool	34 months to first day of Kindergarten*
School Age	Is at least of sufficient age to have attended the first day of Kindergarten within the next 4 months (May 10) through age 12**

Licensed Family Child Care Providers

(Effective November 28, 2011)

	<u>Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Full Day Rate</u>	<u>Weekly Rate</u>
Infant	\$2.62	\$26.30	\$131.45
Toddler	\$2.37	\$23.65	\$118.31
Preschool	\$2.37	\$23.65	\$118.31
School Age	\$2.37	\$23.65	\$118.31

Age Categories – Licensed Family Child Care Provider

Infant	6 weeks to first birthday (12 months)
Toddler	From 12 months to 24 months
Preschool	24 months to 4 months before Kindergarten
School Age	4 months before Kindergarten but younger than 11 years**

Legal Non-Licensed Providers

Effective November 28, 2011 Hourly Rate

Infant	\$1.78
Toddler	\$1.61
Preschool	\$1.61
School Age	\$1.61

Age Categories – Legal Non-Licensed Provider

Infant	Birth to first birthday (12 months)
Toddler	From 12 months through 24 months
Preschool	24 months to 4 months before Kindergarten
School Age	4 months before Kindergarten to 13 years

Registration Fee - Centers and Family Child Care - - - - - Maximum fee: \$26.50

***NOTE: Registration fees may be paid up to two (2) times in 12 months per child.**

***Child Care Centers:** a child may be designated as an “infant” up to the age of 18 months, a “toddler” up to the age of 35 months, or a “preschooler” at the age of 31 months for purposes of staff ratios, group size, and programming, if the parent, teacher, and center director determine that the designation is in the best interest of the child.

**** CCAP’s definition of child,** Minnesota Statutes 119B.11 Subdivision 4, allows CCAP participation and payment for children through age 12 or age 14 if there are special needs. The parent must document the condition related to the special need.

Note: These definitions are found in Minnesota Statutes 245A.02, Subd. 16 and 19 and are enforced by Minnesota Department of Human Services – Division of Licensing.

**ST. LOUIS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE WORKERS**

DULUTH CHILD CARE WORKERS

****Susan Sauls, Family DULUTH/RANGE Child Care Services Supervisor 726-2108**

DULUTH - - - General Phone Number 726-2101; Fax - - - -726-2584
(Dial the General Number; then press '0' right away; ask for the 'Child Care Worker of the Day')

Tim K – 733-2780 (wkr A11) Cases A-At and Sh-Z

Marcia M – 726-2138 (wkr 814) Cases Au-Bell and N-Se

Joan R – 726-2145 (wkr 659) Cases Bem-Br and Johnson-M

Marsha N – 726-2170 (wkr 619) Cases Bu-C and D-Joe

Sue M – 726-2174 (wkr 533)
LNL Registration and providers/billing issues for St. Louis County

Tina G. 726-2092 (wkr 936)
Provides support for demographic provider changes on MEC2 state system.

RANGE CHILD CARE WORKERS

VIRGINIA - - - General Phone Number 471-7137 Fax 749-7123

HIBBING: - - -General Phone Number 262-6000 Fax 262-6049

Clarice S - 262-6024 (wkr 774) All cases A-Hi extension 8324

Judy W - 471-7746 (wkr 646) All cases Hj-Pel extension 7746

Julie B - 262-6056 (wkr 634) All cases Pem-Z extension 8356

St. Louis County Toll Free - 1-800-450-9777 plus Name or Extension Number

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

District Office: 1-800-890-5399 OR <http://childcareawaremn.org/>